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Timeless Thailand Faces a Changing World

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Jets Add New Note to Ancient Cyprus

Breaking out of a Storm a Hurricane Hunter Heads for Home—Air Force and Navy planes play rough tag with storms in order to radio valuable information to the Weather Bureau's Miami office. Getting into and out of a hurricane's "eye" gives flyers and planes a beating. These big ships, now designated WB-29's (the "W" for "weather") usually fly at 1,500 feet or lower in storm areas, keeping the sea in sight so as to make drift readings from the ocean surface.

(SEE PAGE 17)

NATIONAL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, OFFICIAL

country nudging Burma. Flat barges glide in from the great central flood plain, where green checkered fields produce a rice surplus to help feed hungry nations elsewhere in the world.

Women kindle breakfast fires on mat-covered houseboats. Sampans scull by, laden to the gunwales with coconuts, pyramids of mandarin oranges, brown lichee nuts, golden bananas, with fragrant lotus and hibiscus. Gondolalike craft and tiny dugouts crowd the *klongs*, or canals, that lace the city. Housewives paddle through floating markets, stopping for fish here, leeks and mangoes there, and on to bargain for a saucepan or skirt. Open-sided houses lining the banks spill out their domestic life for all to see. Children splash into the brown waters, adding their din to gay banter, blaring radios, and the cries of hawkers.

Never a Colony—A sleek limousine honks its way through streets bulging with carts, trucks, humanity-packed busses, past midget yellow streetcars that scoot along with bicycle-pushed rickshas in their wake. An official makes his way to the House of Parliament. There debate continues on how to break the large Chinese minority's stranglehold on the economy; how to rid the country of British and other foreign capital interests; how to induce the non-commercial-minded Thai to assume the leading role in their nation's development the government is trying to reserve for them. This is the paradox: Thailand, the only Asiatic power to escape Western colonialism, nevertheless has a colonial economy.

A newspaper editor writes an editorial attacking Thai complacency. Red troops threaten the borders. North Indochina is gone, southeast Asia's rice, tin, teak, and rubber are tempting prizes. But the common phrase, "*Mai pen rai*" (It doesn't matter), is still heard throughout Muang Thai, the "Land of the Free." The recent Asia pact accord at Manila; the appointment as United States Ambassador of trouble-shooting John Peurifoy, fresh from a triumph over communists in Guatemala—these, too, form grist for the editor's mill. He fights to muster public opinion behind his government's firm stand against communism.

Keystone of Southeast Asia—Thailand is now in the front lines of the cold war. But throughout this France-size country 19,000,000 easy-going people follow their age-old ways. "Have you eaten your rice?" says the heartland farmer, greeting his neighbor in a bamboo-stilt village. While ploughing the flooded fields he stops often to splash cooling mud and water over his water buffalo to offset the burning sun. A snow-white egret stalks behind, snatching titbits turned up by the homemade plow.

Sickle-harvested, the rice is gathered into sheaves then carted to the winnowing ground. There the sheaves are strewn out and trampled by buffalo and oxen, or the rice is beaten out in bamboo nets. The straw is used for fuel. The farmwife curries the rice to accompany fish, prawns or salted eggs, and fruit. She encourages her sons to spend longer than the customary three-month novitiate in a monastery for she gains merit only through her sons. Buddhists maintain that a woman's sins outweigh the sins of three thousand of the worst men that ever lived.

Thai Fly Kites—Unlike overpopulated Japan, China, or India, Thailand does not want for food. Gentle and fun-loving, the people always find time for a kite-flying contest, to wager on a cricket or fish fight, or to play saba. In this game men and girls toss tiny ivory balls at each other; those hit

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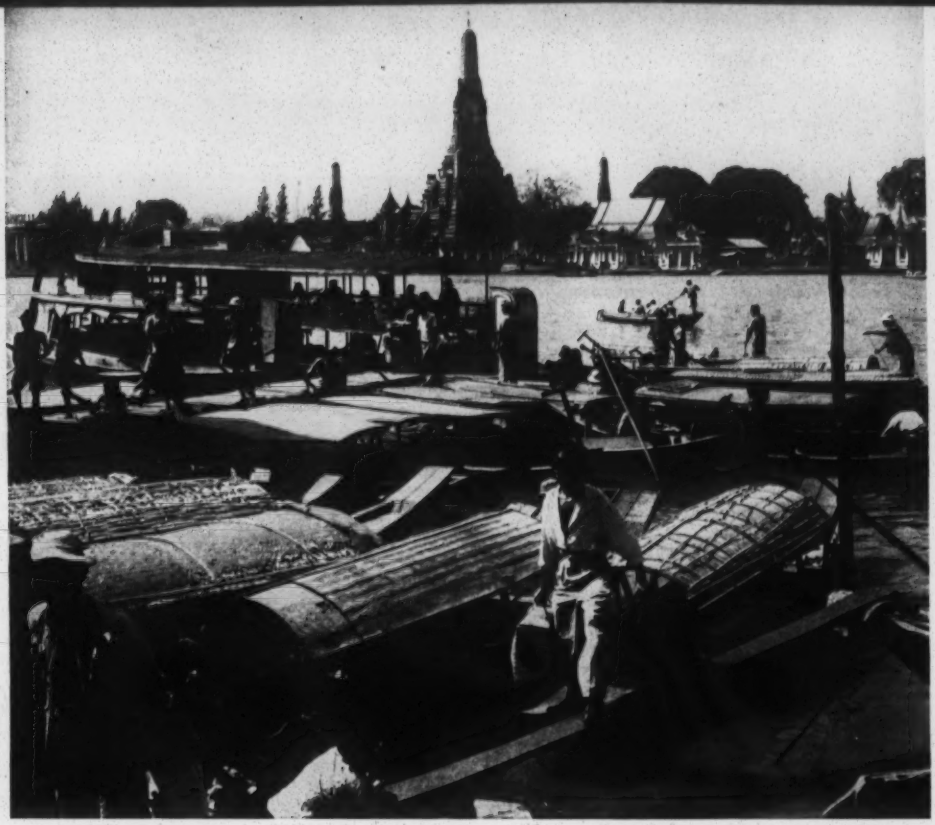

W. ROBERT MOORE, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF

Bangkok's Busy Boats Throng the Chao Phraya—Across the river from Thailand's capital, often called "Venice of the East," Wat Arun, or "Temple of the Dawn," raises its 242-foot tower. Many Westerners know this body of water as the Me Nam, a Thai term for river. Westerners also often refer to Thailand as Siam.

Timeless Thailand Faces a Changing World

Half a world away the sun rises over a jumble of roof tops. Its rays strike tall concrete buildings flanking broad boulevards, penetrate garish alleyways, glitter on a forest of spires encrusted with porcelain mosaics that blaze like jewels.

From some 300 temples yellow-robed monks with shaved heads set forth with begging bowls to seek their day's single meal. As they move among the 900,000 people crowding Thailand's capital city of Bangkok (Krung Thep) they symbolize the timeless current of Buddhism that permeates life in this southeast Asian land.

Bangkok the Focus of Thai Life—Cradled in a bend of the Chao Phraya River, Bangkok lives as much on water as in the streets. Downriver come rafts of teak logs, rolled by elephants into headwaters north in the hill

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Hurricane: Big Blowhard Packs a Wallop

The skies darkened. Howling winds clawed at windows and doors. Rain, as from a giant hand flinging gravel, beat against the shutters. Lights snuffed out. Frightened, I peered into the littered street. Roof tiles, boards, branches whipped by, folded in sheets of rain.

The house quivered with every blast. Would it collapse? Would a wall of water sweep over the breakwater to engulf us? Three blocks away stood safety—an old Spanish hotel whose massive stone walls could blunt any storm. Dad decided to risk it.

Boy Saves Pet—About to step into the sirening wind, I remembered our cat. I found her huddled, trembling, in a corner. I stuffed her inside my coat and we ploughed into the dark street. A gust flattened us against the wall. We fought our way forward, knee deep in water. Writhing power lines sputtered angrily. A huge sign crashed down.

When I unbuttoned my coat in the packed hotel lobby and, kangaroo-like, produced the cat, the fears and anxieties of storm refugees dissolved in bursts of laughter.

That youthful experience in Havana, Cuba, gave birth to this GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS writer's lively interest in hurricanes.

New England Remembers '38—New England, digging out from this season's "Carol" and "Edna," still talks of 1938 when a colossal storm felled forests in swaths, chewed through cities, coated Vermont farmhouses with sea spray. A turn-of-the-century hurricane smashed Galveston, Texas, taking 6,000 lives. In India, 100,000 died during an 1876 storm. Whole cities have been blown to bits or washed away by tidal waves pushed along by relentless winds as high as 150 miles per hour, with gusts reaching 250.

Any wind topping 75

Hurricane, Here We Come—The weather officer hands back a message to be radioed to Miami for coordination with other reports to forecast direction and velocity of the storm.

U. S. AIR FORCE, OFFICIAL

W. ROBERT MOORE, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF

Many Hands Make Backbreaking Work Go Faster—Thai villagers transplant seedling rice from nursery beds to flooded fields in the vast central plain of the Chao Phraya River, one of the world's great rice bowls. Surplus rice accounted for half of Thailand's exports in 1950.

must sing a song. Festivals fill their calendar with pageantry. In one, the *Loy Krathong*, they set adrift tiny boats of paper or banana leaves bearing offerings to the water spirits and candles to wink like fireflies along the night-darkened river.

There are no tragedies in Thai literature. All problems are solved by the timely intervention of the supernatural.

But gone are some ways of the old "Hermit Kingdom." In a land now of parliament and constitution, kings no longer rule by whim, nor do royal harems flourish, nor rich men always win their suits. Laws no longer decree death for whispering during a royal audience; blinding a sentry for allowing stray animals into the palace grounds; amputating the foot that kicked the palace door. No longer is the mouth of the over-discreet opened to the ears, the mouth of the garrulous sewn up, or guilt or innocence determined by the ordeal of swallowing molten lead.

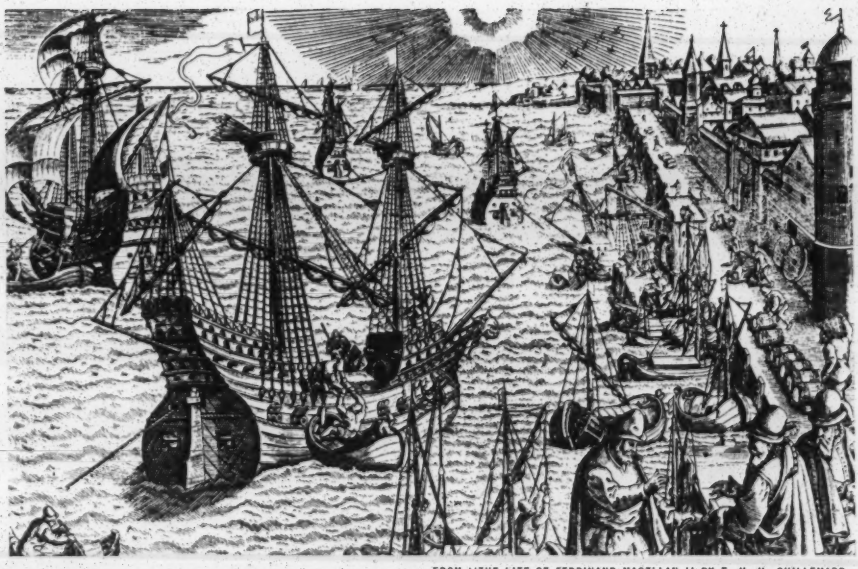
Americans Find Firm Friends in Thailand—American correspondents, tourists, government and United Nations personnel streaming into Bangkok through one of Asia's finest airports receive a smiling welcome from the Thai. Signs advertising familiar soft drinks and Hollywood movies surprise them on streets where dragons, giants, and stylized lions stand guard before gilded temples. Red, white, and blue color the Thai flag.

Near the palace of young American-born, jazz-loving King Phumiphon Aduldet, battle-hardened Thai veterans of Korea train recruits with M-1 rifles, machine guns, and mortars from the United States.

Once the shoe fitted the other foot. Mongkut, immortalized in *Anna and the King of Siam*, wrote President Lincoln, offering to send Siamese war elephants to battle in the American Civil War.

References—Thailand is shown on the National Geographic Society's map of Asia and Adjacent Areas. Write the Society, Washington 6, D. C., for a price list of maps.

See "Scintillating Siam" and "Pageantry of the Siamese Stage," *National Geographic Magazine*, Feb., 1947; "'Land of the Free' in Asia," May, 1934; GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, Jan. 18, 1954, "Thailand Guards Against Red Threat"; Dec. 8, 1952, "Thai Prosperity Lightens Dark Asian Scene." *(School and library discount price for Magazine issues a year old or less, 50¢; through 1946, 65¢. Send for prices of earlier issues.)*



FROM "THE LIFE OF FERDINAND MAGELLAN," BY F. H. H. GUILLEMARD

Discoverers Crossed Oceans in Tiny Ships Like These: Lisbon of the 1490's

Sparked by Prince Henry the Navigator, Portuguese mariners groped down the African coast, discovered Madeira, the Cape Verde Islands, settled the Azores, probed the secrets of the trade winds. Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope. The way to fabled spice isles, to Zipangu (Japan) lay open when Columbus set out with astrolabe, Toscanelli's fanciful map, a copy of Marco Polo, and the Old Testament to find east by sailing west.

Only with his third voyage in 1498 did Columbus touch the South American continent. But he considered it an island and named it Isla Santa. When his fourth, 1502, voyage added Honduras and Panama, Columbus recognized he had reached mainland—but stubbornly believed it to be Asia.

Columbus Needed Press Agent—Ironically, it was the provision merchant who serviced one or two of Columbus's expeditions who gave his name to America. At the time, Amerigo Vespucci represented the commercial House of the Medici in Cadíz. Not as navigator but as an entertaining writer the Florentine merchant outshone Columbus, who badly needed a press agent. King Ferdinand put Columbus in chains; to Vespucci he later gave high honor—the post of chief pilot of the Spanish fleet.

Martin Waldseemüller, Professor of Cosmography at the College of St. Dié in Lorraine, sought knowledge of new discoveries. There came into his hands a letter written by Amerigo Vespucci, or Americus Vespuccius in the Latin vogue of the time. "I have found a continent in that southern part more populous and more full of animals than our Europe or Asia or Africa," wrote Vespucci. Impressed, Waldseemüller translated the letter into Latin, remapped the world, and in 1507 published a little book, *Cosmographiae Introductio.* Herein he proposed calling the new

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miles an hour is rated a hurricane, a name derived from the West Indian term for "big wind." These doughnut-shaped storms, with low pressure centers, are called cyclones because of their circular motion. Pacific typhoons, Australian willy-willies, Philippine baguios, Atlantic hurricanes, and Indian Ocean cyclones are all relatives. In contrast to the tight-twisting up-swept tornado, a hurricane is a whirling platter that may spread hundreds of miles. The calm center, or "eye," has often tricked people into thinking the storm was over. Then like a coiled snake the other side strikes; winds shriek from the opposite direction to continue the spread of death and destruction.

At the start of the Spanish-American War President McKinley put American dollars to work establishing meteorological stations. "I fear a West Indian hurricane more than the entire Spanish Navy," he said.

Niagara in a Phone Booth—Today "Hurricane Hunters" fly wind-battered planes into the heart of each storm, radio back priceless data to Miami's Hurricane Warning Center, and fight their way home again (illustration, cover).

Breaking into the storm is "like going over Niagara Falls in a phone booth," reports one aerial broncobuster. Planes at 10,000 feet are sometimes smacked down to within a hair's breadth of angry seas.

Coordinating reports from planes, ships at sea, and shore-side radar, Miami broadcasts advance warnings by teletype and radio. Thus whole States and regions can batten down for a big blow, saving countless lives and dollars.

The June-to-November Atlantic hurricane season may bring as many as 21 big blows. First called Storm One, Storm Two, and so on, they later were designated by letters. But confusion with the Able, Baker, Charlie code of radio caused the 1953 switch to girls' names—Alice, Barbara, Carol, and so on to Una, Vicky, and Wallis.

Things are rarely calm at the Weather Bureau and hurricane naming is no exception. One indignant letter said: "Just as many men are unpredictable blowhards as women." Another read: "Dear Sir: My name is Kedra. I am eight years old and in the fourth grade. I am sure nobody has that name. Would you name a hurricane Kedra?"

References—"Men Against the Hurricane," *National Geographic Magazine*, Oct., 1950; "Weather Fights and Works for Man," Dec., 1943; "Geography of a Hurricane," April, 1939; GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, March 17, 1952, "Weather Prophets Forecast 30 Days Ahead."

Geographer's Error Named New World America

Why was the New World not named "Columbia" in honor of Columbus, whose memory we honor October 12? Seeking the answer takes us back five centuries to three men—Columbus, a Genoese; Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine; and Martin Waldseemüller, born in Freiburg, Germany.

In this great Age of Discovery navigators, never short on superstition, penetrated ever farther into the Western Ocean, a fearful realm of mythical islands and sea monsters.

harness, the animal puts his keen sense of smell to finding the unfortunate traveler or climber, possibly buried under snow. He digs him out and his partner renders first aid.

But dogs aren't the only animals entitled to bark "Geronimo!" For years western States have transplanted beavers from over-beavered areas to places where their dam-building skill is needed to conserve and regulate the flow of water. At first horses transported them. Where roads permitted, they traveled by truck. Many animals died from the heat on the slow journeys. Now they go by air. In all, some 12,000 beavers have made new starts in life.

Idaho First to Drop Eager Beavers—Idaho made the first successful beaver-drop in 1948. Since then hundreds have parachuted into inaccessible mountain areas of the west. Banded, a pair is dropped in a special box from a height of 500 to 800 feet, floating gently down near a stream. When the pull of the nylon cargo parachute is relieved, hinges of inner-tube rubber spring the box open. If that fails, the beavers quickly gnaw themselves out.

Fish also fly through the air to serve their country. The Fish and Wildlife Service of Uncle Sam's Department of the Interior, in cooperation with certain States, has long air-seeded lakes and streams where the finny population needs a boost.

At first these hatchlings were parachuted in water-filled containers which opened once they struck water. Now these lively two to three inchers are put in a state of suspended animation by a dose of sodium amytal in their tank water. Taken aloft, they are showered down to their new home from a height of about 200 feet. Fresh water puts the wriggles back into them. Not only can more fish be sardined into the airplane or helicopter tanks, but tests show they suffer less injury planted this way than when dropped unanesthetized by parachute.

Truly these are flying fish.

Flying Cats Chute to Kill—A British outpost garrison in Malaya radioed for help to combat an enemy from within. Mice and rats were destroying vital food supplies. Two cats reputed to be good mousers were called up.

In a test run the cats were parachuted from a bomber. When ground crews opened the containers to see how the felines had fared, they bounded off briskly. "They seemed quite jolly about the whole thing," said an air officer. "Now all we have to do is catch them again."

Their next jump will be "On Her Majesty's Service" over the Malayan jungle garrison. Their mission: To instill proper respect for Britain in all rats who trifle with her. Their only request: That they not be honored with the Order of the Bath.

ADOLPH MURIE

References—"Wildlife of Mount McKinley National Park," *National Geographic Magazine*, Aug., 1953; "Mickey the Beaver," Dec., 1928; see *Cats, Dogs,* and *Fishes and Fisheries* in *Cumulative Index to the National Geographic Magazine.*

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lands "Amerige or America, i.e., the land of Americus, after its discoverer Americus."

By now the Atlantic Age was in first bloom. The introverted Europe of the Mediterranean burst its fetters and opened out to face west across not a watery barrier but a great ocean highway that beckoned to stout ships and brave seafarers of every nation. Cartographers sifted reports of returning captains, inked in new lines on their maps, rubbed out old ones. News spread north of Columbus's voyages, of Da Gama's epic trip to the eastern shores Columbus had sought in vain, of later voyages.

Conscience Bothers Geographer—In his cloistered study Waldseemüller pondered. No light matter this naming of a new continent. Discrepancies appeared in Vespucci's accounts, a suspicious vagueness in descriptions; no list of expedition commanders or associates. It seemed this Johnny-come-lately-to-the-sea had not played the key role he claimed. Las Casas, great churchman and historian, branded him an imposter.

Martin Waldseemüller did what he could to rectify his mistake. In a work published in 1513—six years after his first—he replaced "America" with "Terra Incognita." On the coastal regions he inscribed: "This land with the adjacent islands was discovered by Columbus of Genoa by order of the King of Castile."

But it was too late. The Renaissance world had jumped on the Vespucci bandwagon. The name America was on every tongue.

Who was this Amerigo Vespucci? Most reference works place his birthdate in 1451 or 1452. But his hometown of Florence, Italy, this year celebrates his fifth centennial. This is but a minor part of the storm raised by Vespucci. A self-seeking publicist? Detractors point out that on one of his reputed voyages his compass course and distance would have "walked him right across the continent of North America into British Columbia"—a feat difficult even in the tiny ships of those days. Respected scholars take up academic cudgels in his defense. And so the controversy rages.

Whom then should we credit—Columbus, Vespucci? Perhaps it was Kilroy after all.

References—Routes of early explorers may be traced on the Society's World Map. See "Eight Maps of Discovery" (6 in color), and "Founders of New England," *National Geographic Magazine*, June, 1953; "The British Way," April, 1949; "Greatest Voyage in the Annals of the Sea" (Magellan), Dec., 1932; "Genoa, Where Columbus Learned to Love the Sea," Sept. 1928; "Pathfinder of the East" (Vasco da Gama), Nov., 1927.

Four-Footed Paratroopers Hit the Silk

"It's raining cats and dogs" takes on literal meaning as animal paratroopers gain in numbers.

Everyone knows the massive St. Bernard of Alpine fame. Many owe their lives to them. But often stormbound rescue parties arrived too late. The Austrian Mountain Rescue Service now hopes to change this. No more vital hours need be lost reaching storm casualties by foot; men and dogs will be airlifted to them in minutes.

The human team member parachutes to earth, followed seconds later by an "avalanche" dog—a highly trained German police. Freed of his

alive the simple age-old virtues of hospitality, honesty, hard work, and frugality. Jet fighters rip the sky over gnarled olive groves and farmers look up from Biblical tasks to see a Royal Air Force squadron disappear.

"By the time you see them, they're out of sight!" say perplexed men winnowing golden grain.

Britain's gradual withdrawal from Suez is bringing the jet age to Cyprus. A Crown Colony, the island will support Western military power being moved from bases in the strategic canal area.

Tommy Atkins and Bearded Mullah—Crack British paratroopers, Tommies, and kilted Scots bagpipers now share the ancient land with bearded mullahs, fezzed Turks, laughing harvesters speaking Homeric Greek, and drought-resistant sheep whose tails get so fat some have to be propped and towed on little carts.

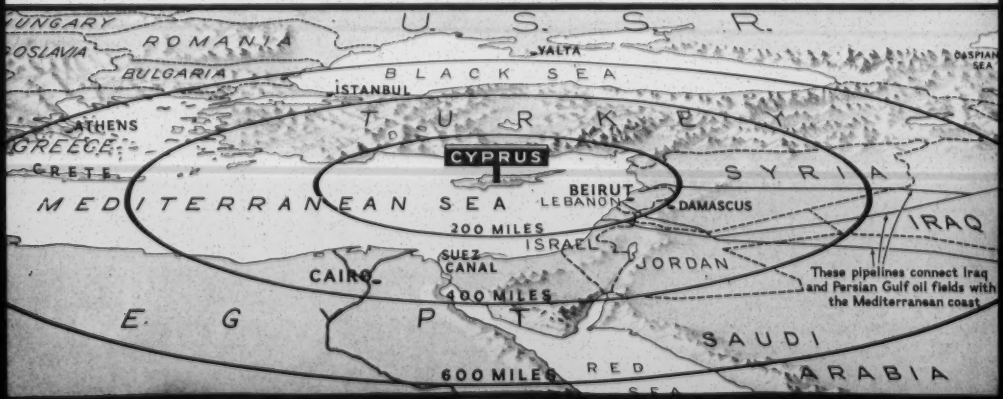
Except for 80,000 islanders of Turkish descent, the half-million Cypriotes are Greek in heritage, language, and religion. For these reasons Greece is asking the United Nations to consider its claims for ownership of the island.

Actually Greece has never owned Cyprus. Through 50 centuries of stormy history, the Mediterranean's third-largest island has fallen to Egyptians, Persians, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders from France and England, Venetians, and Turks. All have left their mark.

Ruined Crusader castles whose battlements shielded the cohorts of Richard the Lionheart are attractions to lure visitors up hairpin-curving roads. In Nicosia, the capital, modern glass-bricked structures crowd ornate balconied buildings of Turkish design within the circle of moated walls built by 16th-century Venetians. Minarets added to its towers have transformed a Latin cathedral of the Middle Ages into a mosque for Moslem Turks.

A Busy People—But Cyprus is not entirely yesterday's handmaiden. Its busy people support growing industries and many cottage crafts. Lefkara lace is world famous. Textile mills process island-grown cotton. Cottagers weave it into bright patterned fabrics on home looms. The ancient copper mines are again producing after a lapse of more than seven centuries. Copper took its name from Cyprus.

Cypriotes delight in picnics and festivals. Their annual Orange Day celebration attracts large crowds to Varosha, ancient Famagusta's new suburb on the east coast. Orange-crowned beauty "queens" glorify the orange harvest. Survival of pagan times are festivities honoring Aphro-



GEORGE PICKOW, THREE LIONS, INC.

A Cyprus Farmer Winnows Wheat—Like his ancestors of Homer's day, he flings the grain into the air. Heavy kernels fall to earth, chaff is gone with the wind.

Jets Add New Note to Ancient Cyprus

Driving through hill-set vineyards of western Cyprus, Franc Shor came to sun-drenched Phiti, a village of narrow lanes and mud-walled houses where girls handloom intricate designs from memory. The matron Roxandra welcomed the *National Geographic Magazine* staffman and his wife and served them fried cheese, caper leaves, smoked pork, and sausages soaked in wine.

Offering to pay for the feast, Franc was rebuffed.

"You should be careful," he joked. "The National Geographic Society has more than 2,000,000 members and if I write that you give lunches free, they may all come and visit you."

Roxandra threw her arms wide. "But they would be welcome," she said.

Defense Focus of Near East—In the eastern Mediterranean island, new defense focus of the Near East, Roxandra and her sunny people keep

dite, goddess of love, who, according to legend, arose from the sea off Paphos on the southwest coast.

Weddings keep traditions alive. As many as ten bridesmaids and *coumbari* (best men) and a throng of relatives and friends flock to the church, each holding a candle. As the priest pronounces the words "to love and obey," the bridegroom steps on the bride's toes so that she will be sure to remember. At the wedding banquet a pair of roasted doves is served to the bridal couple to ensure a peaceful married life.

Old superstitions linger. The useful ox is considered blessed and is given the first helping of the family's Christmas Eve feast, the first doughnut at Epiphany. A dog's bark in the evening is held to be warning of an impending earthquake, owls hooting are considered bad luck.

Long hair is much admired on a woman. It is said if a black snake is placed lengthwise on her hair while she repeats the words "May my hair grow as long as this snake," she will be assured of luxuriant tresses.

References—Cyprus appears on the Society's map of Southwest Asia. See "Cyprus, Idyllic Island in a Troubled Sea," *National Geographic Magazine*, May, 1952; "American Fighters Visit Bible Lands," March, 1946; "Unspoiled Cyprus," July, 1928.

Fresh and Crusty from the Beehive Oven comes the week's supply of bread for a Cyprus family. The small girl lends her mother a hand with the long wooden lifter.

FRANC SHOR, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF